RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 25ih .February, 1986] 6
Phalgtma, 1907 *(S<tka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock. Mr. Chairman hair.

REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I refer with sorrow and the passing away of Shrimati Devi Aran former nominal ber of this House and an artiste of great eminence.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi was born at Madurai in Tamil Nadu in February 1904. Sim . she had evinced great interest in theosophy and broke of orthodoxy. Born balk I d renowned Pavlova and later Bharatanatyamunder the She soon exc everyone only a great Bharatanatyam emiment coregraphar. She received • ' m in 1957 and Several awards from India and abroad.

Shrimati Rnkmini Devi worked for India's cultural renaissance through art, culture and education. To give concrete sh to her ideas. J severr' art. dance. and educational institutions, notably "Kala Kshetra" at Adyar, which have produced a number of accomplished artists and restored Bharatanatyem to its pristine and grace. As a choreographer of excellence. she had directed a number of Dance Dramas in Sanskrit, Tamil, Tehugu and Bengali. She was also associated with the Vishwa Bharati and Banaras Hindu University.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi was a great lover of an'mals -and introduced in our House a Bill—called the- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill, 1953. Her efforts culminated in the Parliament enacting a law relating to Prevention of cruelty to Animals in 1950.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale was a Member of the Rajya Sabha for ten years, having been nominated to the Rajya Sabha first in 1952 and then re-nominai-ed in 1956. For her accomplishment in irts, she was awarded the Padma Bhu-shan in 1956.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale.

I request Members to rise in their places arid a minute's silence as a mark of respect t$_0$ the memory of the departed.

{Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute,)

MR. CHAIRMAN: 'Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family cur sense of profcund and d lathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Payment of D.A. so the Central Government employees

*21. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: t

SHRIMATI RAT AN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

fa) what ig the number of D.A. instalments which have become due as on date for payment to {he Central Government employees on account of recent rise in prices of almost all the commodities; and

(b) by when these instalments are likely to be released for payment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI),: (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table 3f the House.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bir Bhadra Pratap Singh,

Statement

(a) and (b) Consequent upon the increase of 8 points in the average index level at the end of December, 1985 from 600 points to 608 points, one more instalment of dearness allowance has become due for consideration with effect from 1-1-1986. The impact of recent increase in prices of wheat, rice, petroleum products, coal iertilizers etc. is not yet known.

Payment of each instalment of Dearness Allowance to Central Govt, employees cost the exchequer approximately Rs. 70 crores per annum Therefore, question of payment of each instalment has to be considered carefully with regard t_0 their impact on the'. economic situation and the Budget. The question of sanction for payment of the D.A. instalment due from 1-1-1986 is receiving the attention of the Government. It is, however, not possible to indicate any time limit for taking a decision in this regard.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH; Mr. Chairman, Sir. I am quite conscious of the facts given in the reply that, one mors instalment of clearness allowance ha_s become . due .for consideration wi^h effect from 1-1-1986 and that each instalment costs Rs. 70 crores to the public ex-equer. The questions. t^at I want ask are two. Firstly, what are the reasons' for which full neutralisation of dearness allowance is not granted to several Government employees whereas this is done in the case of bank employees and employees in the other* public sector undertakings? Secondly, what are the details of items which are taken into considera- tion for calculating the average price index level for granting dearness allowance to the Central Government employees and whether after knowing the impact of the recent steep rise in the prices on account of petroleum[1] etc., that, will be taken into considera- lion for deciding the rise in the average price index for granting the dearness allowance?

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJART: Sir, for a general rise of 8 points in the c.p.i., one D.A. Instalment is due Sir, s_0 far a_s the pay structure and the dearness allowance is concerned, the Fourth Pay Commission is looking into that. And we are awaiting the main report of the Fourth Pay Commission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your $_s$econd supplementary.

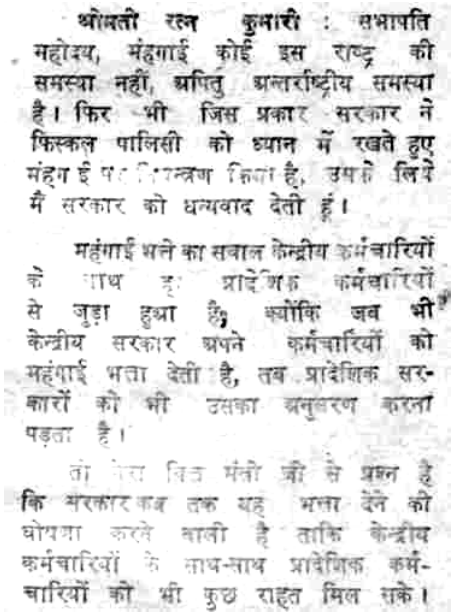
SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I know and I am quite conceding the fact that the present quantum of dearness allowance is not enough to neutralise the inflation and the increase in the cost of living index but I am more bothered .about the Class III and Class IV employees. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is contemplating any steps so that these employees could form themselves into small cooperatives and be eligible to some sort of a subsidy etc. ,or that the essential commodities could be provided to them at cheaper rates so that the ; on them may not *h* and the Nearness- allowance mt to them is not neutra-•ices.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: • given two interim raliefs to Government employees. A_s th_e'hon. Member knows in the last year the instalments of allowance were given on 1-1-85, 1-5-85, 1.8.85, 1.11.1985. These have been already paid to the Government employees. So far a_s the low-paid employees are concerned, we are protecting their interests and so far as this suggestion that ha_s been made by the hon. Member i_s concerned, there i_s no such proposal before the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is the supply of essential commodities.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, may I supplement to what my hon. colleague has already said? The hon. Member has rightly talked about the class III and Class IV employees and about th^ fi^ed income groups which sect'ons are most severely affected by any increase in prices and what relief could be give$_n$ to them May I assure the hon. Member that the Government will be taking a very early decision on the instalment that is due to the employees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Shrirufia Ratan Kumari.



श्रीमती रत्न कुमारी : सभापति महोदय, मंहगाई कोई इस राष्ट्र की समस्या नहीं, अपितु अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय समस्या है। फिर भी जिस प्रकार सरकार ने फिस्कल पालिसी को ध्यान में रखते हुए मंहगाई पर नियन्त्रण किया है, उसके लिये मैं सरकार को धन्यवाद देती हूं।

महंगाई भत्ते का सवाल केन्द्रीय कर्मचारियों के साथ ही प्रादेशिक कर्मचारियों से जुड़ा हुआ है, क्योंकि जब भी केन्द्रीय सरकार अपने कर्मचारियों को महंगाई भत्ता देती है, तब प्रादेशिक सरकारों को भी उसका अनुसरण करना पड़ता है।

तो मेरा वित्त मंत्री जी से प्रश्न है कि सरकार कब तक यह भत्ता देने की घोषणा करने वाली है ताकि केन्द्रीय कर्मचारियों के साथ-साथ प्रादेशिक कर्मचारियों को भी कुछ राहत मिल सके।

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH. Sir, thi$_s$ relates to the State Government employees. It is the State Gov-nents. which will be able to say something.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Chairman. Sir, you know that the method according to which the dearness allowance is granted to Central Government employees is far from compensating them the actual loss in the real wages suffered by them due to rise in prices because foi every 8 point rise on an annual iverage they are given d. a. and the fact is that when this annual average i$_s$ reached is known to the Government from its appropriate agency much later and then the Government takes further tim$_e$ to take a decision thereupon and by that time the prices go up further and the employees continue to suffer. A$_s$ has happened in the recent case also, the Government knows that the Central Government employees hove become entitled to get another instalment of d. a. from January but till today the Union Government has not sanctioned its "grant. By the time another price rise has taken place because of this administered orders in raising the price$_s$ of every essential commodity. *So.* Central Government employees were demanding the automatic linkage with the price index and the grant of dearness allowance as and when prices rise. But the whole issue, as the Minister of State for Finance ha$_s$ stated, has been referred to the Fourth Pay Commission and tbj Fourth Pay Commission is sitting tight ove$_r$ its job and neither the Government has been in the Fourth Pay Commission to submit its report and nor is the Fourth Pay Commission...

ME. CHAIRMAN: Two minutes are over.

[R3 DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, my is what positive stepsand the Governmenthas lose to take to expedite i of the CentralPay *; Report and finalise this once for all?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: It is +rue that Government toyees do not get fully compen-d but the hon. Member should not forget the fact that" this very Government when it^came to industrial workers, hud compensated 101 per tent of the salary and raised the D.A. from 1.30 t$_0$ 1.65. About the CPI, it has taken time and T think we have to improve it and see how it can be expedited and we get early information About lmlcage, the linkage is there. I think the hon. Member was referring to automatic payment when he said about automatic linkage. "We do try it and if you see the record

of the Government of last year, you will find that we have been paying in. Stalments promptly. While responding to Vir Bhadraji I said that we are taking early decision on the D.A. which is due and we have not delayed it. As for the Fourth Pay Commission Sir, the Pay Commission is an autonomous body. We cannot direct the Commission to do it but we have certainly requested in an informal way and the Pay Commission is also very much concerned atout it.

SHRI P. N. SUKUL: When in accordance with the rerjort of the last Pay Commission the Government are already committed to grant increase in dearness allowance with the of 8 points in CPI, why it Has been mentioned in this reply that the qu lion of payment of each instalment has to be considered carefully with regard to their impact on the economic situation and the Budget? means that the Government can even waive its commitment' it means that the Government can even dec' otherwise. Once the Government is committed, then the Government must evolve such procedures whereby as soon as there is an 8-point increase in CPI, D.A. should be automatically granted but the employees again may take the position that additional D.A. must be granted from that date. This is number one. Secondly, I would like to know, as my other colleague said, whenever there is payment of D. A. to the Central Government employees, it has an impact—a natural impac!— on all other employees, the State employees, the public sector employees and local bodies employees, because their D.A. is related to Central D.A. and then complecation arise at various levels of the States because due to meagre resources, they are not able to pay it. So, what is needed is, there should be a national formula~bf dearness allowance which should the needs of the salaried classes, the Government employees etc. will the Government consider the question of evolving a national formula on dearness allowance?

SHRI V1SHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: The h°n. Member mentioned that Government may not honour Us commitment. So far as dearness "allo-wance is concerned, I think before raising this sort of suspicion, he should see the record of the Government. We have never defaulted. What the hon. Member referred to was said in the context that sometime D.A. has been impounded and deposited in their fund or paid later on an that was in the context of certain conditions in the economy, and that is in the confidence of the Government emplo\ and I think it is only to that extent that it has been referred to and not that we go back and no pay it. [can assure you that when the D.A. is due, Government will pay it. Of course flexibility is there according to the condition of the economy; sometime it can be paid a little later, that is a different thing. About the State Government, employees, many Chief Ministers have said that when we raise the D.A. it has an impact on them and" on their resources but we. cannot hold back the payment on:e it becomes due. And on the one hand the hon. Members are saying that we should not hold back the payment and on other they say it has an impact on the State employees. These are the two contradictory positions. About national formula, there is the formula by which Central Government employees are granted D.A. About linkage with the State Government employees etc., I will not be in a position to say anything without knowing the views of the State Governments.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: ~Hs the hon. Minister aware that every '"ear we are depriving the State Government employees of an amount of about Rs. 300 crores by linking—what he called there is automatic linkage— to the average" of 8-point rise in the course of a year? As far as the question of automatic linkage is concerned, which Mr. Dipen Ghosh also raised. I believe, it should be linked not to the average of a "year, but as soon as the cost of living index rises, it

should be related to that. Therefore on the question of automatic linkage also there is deficiency part from, the delay in making payment. The Pay Commission has recommended that for every 8 point rise, those who are getting a basic pay of less than ' 300, latei on modified to Rs. 400, would also be neutralised to the ex-of 4 per cent. This formula itself affects those who , are getting a basic pay of less than Rs. 400. Now, we are so much'concerned over bringing people above poverty line that...

MR. CHAIRMAN: minutes Put your question.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: ... forgetting the thirty year old concept of a living wage. Secondly, in the case of those who are getting s basii:: pay of more than Rs.'400,'the neutralisation in the case of Government employees is 3 t,er cent against the rise of 4 per cent. The question is. should the Government wait for the Pay Commission when justice is as Simple as this, to modify the earlier decision and in any case re-commerd to the Pay Commission that ihis should be the principle adopted in regard to payment of dearness allowance?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the Minis-ter will reply.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: The hon. Member is now suggesting a change in the formula itself. I think, the Pay Commission would take care of this. We are implementing the existing formula. May I remind Ihe hon. Merriber that the Third Pay Commisllon recommended automatic D.A. up to CPI 272 points which had been reached a long time back? Beyond that, the Government :s still paying DA on the basis of the same formula. This shows that Government has taken care erf the employees' difficulties and it has not stuck only to the recommendation of the Pay Commission. *

SHRI, DIPEN GHOSH: You are not giving a full answer m the sense that the Third Pay Commission's recom-dation was to pay clearness, allowance up to 272 points, but there was also another part of the Pay Commis-recommendation that if the consumr price index goes beyond 272 points, it will justify the revision of the pay scales as such. This you have not done yet.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: I think, the Pay Commission is taking care of it.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: The 272 points had been reached long back. By paying dearness allowance Beyond that, you are depriving the employees.

MR, CHAIRMAN: The point which the hon. Member makes is that the Pay Commission recomlhended neutralisation up to 272 and thereafter the Pay Commission thought of re-revision of wages and not merely giving of DA. What is your answer to (h?s?

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: the recommendation of the Third Pay Com-mission was that DA should *be* paid up to 272 points and afterwards the pay structure should he reviewed. But the point here is. the Government is t;ikin care of the employees by giving additional DA

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: \t what rate? The earlier rate.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: We cannot say that Government did not lake care of its employees. Thai is why, beyond 272 points, additional DA has been paid. Now, the Fourth Pay Commission is looking into all these aspects. Let us wait for ihe recommendations of the Fourth P;iy Commission.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Up to A hen?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRA1 \P SINGH: I think, the Fourth Pay Com-mission is taking care of all your questions.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY; I would like to know, while fixing DA whether the Government is taking into account the wholesale price index or any other item like house rent allowance increase and also the factor. ..

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member does not know the subject. Mr. China Basu.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have precisely made the calculation of the quantum of rise in the cost of living index and consumer price index before the recent price hike was announced? Secondly, may I know from, the hon. Minister, when he is so much fond of long-term policy statement, whether the Government have any intention of evolving a long-term prices and wages policy in view of the spurt in prices off and on causing tremendous miseries to the working class and the salaried employees?

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: So far as CPI is concerned, we are depending upon the recommendations of the Labour Bureau of Simla. So far as the policy is concerned, this is a Question Hour and I am not in a position to declare policy matters here.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Whether the Government has got the intention.

I am not asking about policy matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In Question Hour, you cannot ask question *of-* policy. The .Minister is right in his answer.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Have I got the right to know[1] the intention of ihe Government or not?

AIR. CHAIRMAN; Not in the question time, please. Yes. Dr. Shanti Patel.

DR. SHANTI G. PATEL: The Govern ment employees are not being paid even now acocrding to the norms laid down by the 25th Indian Labour Conference, of which Government representatives are a part. In this background the clearness allowance which is being paid does not fully neutralise the rise. As far as the Bureau of Labour statistics are concerned it is well known that the computation is faulty and this was stated in so many terms by the Committee appointed by the Go-ernment of India and headed by Prof. Rath. I would, therefore, like to know from the hon. Finance Minister a whether he would not like to revise the present rate of compensation from Rs. 1.G5 per point to Rs, 2.50, as demanded by labour from time to time \ waiting; for the report of the Pay Commission because this is not something which iv to the Pay Commission.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI: Sir_r as I have stated, there is no such proposal to revise. Now we are waiting for the report of the Fourth Pay Commission-About the pay structure, dearness allowance—all these things are being looked into by the Fourth Pay Commission. Let us wait for its report and we are expecting them to submit the report in the middle of the calendar year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Question No. 22.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: He is asking a question about cost of living indices.

SHRI D1PEN GHOSH: The Minister is not giving correct answer. The question is regarding revision of indices. He is pleading his ignorance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have made your point. Question No. 22.

Export of drugs to Afghanistan

*22. SHRI DINKARRAO COVIND-RAO PATIL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether drugs are being exported to Afghanistan; and

(b) if so, the details of the exports m'ade during the last three years, year-wise?